1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

ABNORMAL CONDUCT

On a less-than-legal level there are forms of social conduct which are definitely in violation of social norms and yet not viewed in the eyes of a people as behavior that calls for explicit sanctions. Such acts, though disapproved, society is willing to leave to the implicit sanctions of public opinion and the desire of the individual to stand well. The off-the-norm behavior described in this section is of this order.

ILLEGITIMACY

Comanche attitudes towards illegitimacy show no vindictiveness, though the feeling prevailed that every child should have a recognized father. Illegitimacy was declared by all informants to have been rare. Premarital sex relations were common enough, and abortion was not unusual, but in case of childbirth it is asserted that the father married the mother willingly. If the father did not come forth voluntarily and his identity was known, the parents of the girl are said to have gone to him with friendly talk to persuade him to marry the daughter. In cases of doubt (multiple possibilities), informants say paternity was determined on the basis of physical resemblance between child and supposed father: or if the child was old enough, it was determined by whom the child chose as its father. It is stated that if the father was not known, the girl was not usually married to another for a long time after the birth of her child, for the father could come and claim his child at any time. The problem-set was not to punish the mother, but to properly provide for the child.

That's It gave a history which is typical of the Comanche attitudes.

Case 33. Illegitimacy
Informant: That's It

"An unmarried woman had a child. She said she would never be able to take care of that child, so she thought she would get rid of it. Accordingly, she took it to a grove and there washed it up and laid it on a bed of sage leaves. Pretty soon a young man came out to tend horses. He found the little baby lying there. He looked at it and picked it up and wrapped it in his blanket. He turned back home with it. Just as he stepped through the door of his tipi the baby cried. The brave's mother, who was there, looked up, 'Did I hear a baby?'

" 'Yes,' said the youth, 'here's my son.'

" 'What a burden!' the mother cried.

"But her son insisted on keeping it, so they took the child to a wet nurse. They gave her presents in payment for feeding the baby. Later on they bought corn meal from the Mexicans to feed it. When the boy was three years old, his father told his mother and father that he wanted to go on the war-path. He was gone for a year.

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●848 On the day he came back the little boy's mother wanted to come over to the warrior's tipi. She hesitated three times and couldn't get herself to go. But she came over at breakfast the next morning and called at the tipi. They invited her into the tipi and told her to sit down next to the boy. The girl told the grandmother that she had come to do dishes and clean up everything. She went over and sat down next to the grandmother.

"The people wondered: they asked her how it happened she was visiting them when she had no connection to them. Then she told her story. When she finished she begged to be allowed to stay in any capacity.

"The old man, the grandfather, said, 'Yes, it is good. It is up to the old woman, my wife.'

"The old woman, the grandmother, said, 'Yes, it is all right; it is up to the old man and my son.'

"Then the brave said, 'She will take care of him. It is good. She may stay here with us.'

"The child was named Covered With Sage; that is how they found him."

INCEST

835 626 Incest was forbidden. The tabu applied to parent-child (real and classificatory), brother-sister (real and classificatory) and uncle-niece, aunt-nephew relationships. There was no rationalization of the tabu. It was just there. As Bluefoot observes today, "They did not know about the harm in it. They just didn't want the people to make fun of them for marrying a relative."

"Making fun of them" and ostracism were the only controls used by the Comanches to reprove incest.

One whole band is damned in name because of their reputed incestuousness. Lots of Maggots on The Penis was this band's regular appellation. An alternative sobriquet was Something Together. It is declared that this band is now extinct because of its incestuousness. (This might vaguely imply a supernatural sanction, but more likely this is a reflection of attitudes derived from the whites.) Comanche attitudes towards incest are revealed in the following case.

835 588 *Case 34. Incest*
Informant: Talker (Recorded by Jeannette Mirsky)

"There was a family, father, mother, brother and sister. The children grew up. When the daughter was about twenty-five and very pretty, the family seemed to get separated from the rest of the band. They camped by themselves. It made the mother wonder why they had gotten away from the others. 'It is dangerous to live off by oneself: in case of attack there is no one to help us,' she complained.

"But the son said, 'Be quiet. It is not dangerous.'

The Comanches

848 Many forms of social conduct which are considered Abnormal in our own society were not considered criminal by the Comanches. Their attitudes toward illegitimacy, which seems to have been rare, show no vindictiveness, although the feeling prevailed that every child should have a recognized father.

Premarital sex relations were common, but in case a child was born as a result, the father usually married the mother. The father could claim the child at any time.

835 Incest, which consisted of sexual relations between two persons within three degrees of relationship, was tabu, but there was no legal control. The few men who were known to have committed incest were called *gɔsa*, "crazy." Beyond this, there was only informal ostracism—and more sneering references. Thus, when Pointing to the Rising Sun married his sister's beautiful daughter, Wide Feet, his own sister refused to address him as *monapɔ*, "son-in-law," which would have been the respectful and proper thing to do, had it been a proper marriage. The People did not let it pass, however; they made it a point always to refer to him, her elder brother, as her son-in-law.

The Comanches actually had strong feelings against incest—brother-sister avoidance was enjoined on this basis—but they felt no need to impose strong sanctions against it. Most men were too concerned with the maintenance of their personal prestige to mar it with such an act. And perhaps more important is the fact that Comanche supernaturals were in no sense projected images of a rewarding and punishing father. Incest was not a sin against the gods any more than it was a crime. There was no need to punish the offender in order to protect the community from supernatural wrath. The act remained an offense against good taste, nothing more.

839 Rape, except upon captives, occurred infrequently and was not part of the general pattern. Sleep-crawling by either boy or girl was legitimate if the recipient did not object to quiet night visits. But before the advent of the white race's demoralizing influence, Comanche women rated high in chastity.

674 577 Theft was so unusual that no provision was made for it in the legal scheme. Consequently, it must fall into the vague class of unapproved, abnormal acts which were outside the scope of the law. Generosity was so highly valued that he who had need of something had only to indicate his desire, and he would receive it as a gift.

9: Gladwin E-5 (1940) 1948 NO6 Comanche NO6

though this was not invariable. There was apparently no ceremony connected with adoption.

An illegitimate child was a great shame to all members of the family, and especially to the girl's brother, whose prestige was to some extent a reflection of that of his family. It was usually brought up by the girl's mother, whom it would call mother. Some pressure was put on the boy by the girl's parents to marry her, but he could not be forced to do so. The girl's family referred to him teknonymously, but his family apparently did not recognize the relationship at all. Her marriage possibilities were somewhat reduced by this unfortunate happening, and she might well become only a secondary wife of some older man.

Twins were not wanted, and were generally considered a danger to the mother, as well as to all her blood kin to a lesser degree. This was especially true as they grew up, suggesting the effects of the gradual emergence of the child's personality discussed above. Some women, with the assistance of powerful names for the children, disregarded this belief and raised them together, but others disposed of the younger twin. If some woman did not come and offer to take one, it might be laid outside the tipi somewhere, where someone invariably came to get it. The mother attempted to forget it. If one twin died, all the clothing and other things which had been prepared for it were buried with it, and the mother or her sister made a round of the camp collecting what was offered in the way of other clothes.

Among the parents' siblings, there is a definite emphasis on the mother's side. The mother's sisters were apt also to be married to one's father and, even if not, were usually around the family helping if possible. The mother's brother is also considered to be a source of guidance, assistance, and favors of fairly major proportions; it is significant that he, also, is permitted to give away a girl in marriage. As usual, behavior toward more distant parents, aunts and uncles depends on personality and propinquity; whether or not they have any children of their own is also often of importance. TY's father remained with her mother's family to marry two more sisters, so that she was brought up in the midst of a great number of maternal relatives. The members of this extended family were rather strikingly unprolific, so that she had very few even distant siblings; as a result she received a great deal of attention and an almost continuous stream of extremely valuable gifts from all her parents, aunts and uncles, even though related in very roundabout ways. Her younger brother, incidentally, became a favorite child according to the best institutionalized patterns.

Husband-Wife, Wives were very clearly dominated by their warrior-husbands, and acceded to their wishes in all matters, including the treatment of children. Men could, and often would, beat their wives on any pretext they chose, while a wife's infidelity frequently led to extremely harsh treatment,

551 fathers or grandfathers of those who bear these newly established surnames. In no case does a surname stem from farther back
(848) than the third generation. Occasionally the
586 surname is taken from the maternal line, from an aunt in one instance, but this is not the rule except in cases of illegitimacy or divorce. The adoption of a person's own Comanche given name as a surname along with an American first name is quite common, e.g., Casper Tis so yo, in which tïsoyó·ʔ *one who has confidence in someone else*, is the Comanche given name of this man of 69. Family names are usually kept in their full original form, but with the agency's rendition of them in English spelling appearing on the rolls; for example, Harry Tobits ser kumah, tïvicikumaʔ *real male, or husband*; Lena Suah rah o lah, suaráʔura? *one who meets somebody intentionally*; Carmelïta Delphine Atetewuthtakewa, ʔetiwïhtïkwaʔ *one who strikes with a bow*; Olive Chahtoeiebitten, cahtoʔivitïn, *one who pulls something out on his arrival*; and Cecil Ahtoowoosserahle, ʔotïwïsaráʔ·kiʔ *brown ears pricking up*.

4. Comanche names are only infrequently translated into English and these are for the most part medicine-animal names: Frank Redelk, Violet Yellowfish, Vincent Red Bird, Olive Black Otter, Lelia Yellowwolf, Thuma (from Therma) Chicken, and Philip

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32: Gilles O;X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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slough and at some distance from the arbor. Brooms made from the native broom weeds tied tightly to a stick handle, brush end down, were used to sweep the arbor and cooking area scrupulously clean; and there were surprisingly few flies around the arbor. Generally shade was available, and the eating was done under the trees, away from the arbor. Wood, of course, was the fuel for the campfire.

When the time came for the really bad weather of fall, tents were pitched. Some families still had tepee poles and canvas covering for them. The buffalo-hide coverings had been gone for a long time when I arrived on the scene. The tents and tepees, together with the house, supplied the shelter needed in truly bad weather.

I have been in and around camps many times, and on occasion have even found it necessary to stay for the night. I watched the division of labor, seeking to find a clue as to who bossed whom. I never arrived at any satisfactory answers. Apparently the husband kept hands off, and the cooking area may have been out of bounds for him. At least, he stayed clear until the call for food. I never saw any of the women seek advice from the husband while the preparation of the meal was in progress.

There were exceptions, but at the home camp the husband usually corralled the horses and roped the ones to be used. Generally one of the women would come and help him harness or saddle up. Apparently the same wife helped with the horses each time. I was never aware of an order being given. When a family was in camp on the reservation for its Grass Money, the husband ordinarily cared for the horses.

At the home camp, one or two of the squaws would take a team and the wagon into the woods for the camp's wood supply. The squaws selected the down timber and chopped it into small enough pieces so that they could load it on the wagon to be hauled to camp. In one family group, this task was permanently assigned to a wife who had been so indiscreet as to give birth to a white baby. (The displeasure was not, however, visited upon the child. Not only was it treated just the same as the other children, but at times I was inclined to think it was actually the husband's favorite.)

I never saw anything to indicate that the first or oldest wife was necessarily the favorite one, nor was I able to tell which one of the women established the division of labor. A more trained observer than I might have secured more accurate information. In any event, of these things I am sure: there was a division of labor, and each wife